

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT

09:00 a.m., August 9, 2006

David C. Joseph Hearing Room
5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A
Santa Rosa, California

ITEM: 3

SUBJECT: Public Hearing on the Page Property, 4280 Canyon Road, Willits, California

- ACTION:
1. Resolution No. R1-2006-0067 Approving an Initial Study/Checklist and Negative Declaration for the proposed groundwater extraction and treatment system; and
 2. New Waste Discharge Requirements which also serves as a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit Order No. R1-2006-0067

This item is to consider adoption of a Resolution approving an Initial Study/Checklist and Negative Declaration, and Waste Discharge Requirements which also serve as a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit for a groundwater extraction and treatment system at the Page Property located at 4280 Canyon Road in Willits, California.

Background

In the 1940's the City of Willits acquired a 2.4 acre parcel of land to the east of the City of Willits for use as a municipal landfill (Figure 1). This property is referred to as the Page Property or the Old Willits Landfill. The property is located at 4280 Canyon Road in Willits, Mendocino County. In the 1940's municipal waste disposal operations began. The operations included the incineration of waste to reduce the volume of wastes. In the 1950's, septage wastes were also disposed at the property. In the late 1960's, liquid waste from chrome plating operations from the former Remco Hydraulics Facility in Willits, and other wastes collected in the City of Willits were disposed at the Page Property. Initially, the chromic acid was disposed along with the garbage, but later, pits were dug and the chromic acid was disposed into those pits. Industrial wastes from the former Remco Hydraulics Facility were disposed at the Page Property until early 1974.

The site is vacant and is used for cattle grazing. Some metal debris is evident at the site sticking out of the ground. A spring exists at the base of the old burn dump that is contaminated with hexavalent chromium, and discharges to Darby Creek.

Soil and groundwater is contaminated with hexavalent chromium. Low levels of volatile organic compounds are also present in groundwater. To date, 18 groundwater monitoring wells have been installed to define the extent of the contamination. Concentrations of hexavalent chromium up to 237,000 parts per billion have been detected in groundwater monitoring well PPMW-1, in the vicinity of the former waste disposal pits.

Project Description

Shallow groundwater at the base of the former burn dump will be collected utilizing an interceptor trench installed across the base of the slope of the landfill approximately 35 feet east of Darby Creek. The trench will be installed perpendicular to lateral groundwater flow in the unconsolidated sediments. The bottom of the trench will be keyed into bedrock. Bedrock is encountered near grade on both ends of the designed trench, and has been encountered at a depth of about 8 feet below ground surface in the central area of the designed trench. The trench will be approximately 70 to 80 feet in length, gravel filled, with perforated piping installed to direct flow to a central sump. Impermeable material will be installed at the base of the trench and on the downgradient surface to ensure all of the flow is intercepted and directed to the trench sump. The land surface topography will remain unchanged during the interceptor trench installation, so that the rainfall surface run-off will not be collected. The intercepted shallow groundwater will be conveyed to the groundwater treatment system located near the former chromic acid disposal area.

Contaminated groundwater will be conveyed through one set of two granular activated carbon vessels reducing hexavalent chromium concentrations to below the detection limit of 1 part per billion (ppb). The groundwater treatment system facility will be constructed in the approximate location shown on Figure 2. The facility will consist of a 30 foot square concrete pad with an elevated curb to provide a measure of secondary containment for the treatment equipment. The treatment equipment will be placed on the concrete pad, and an insulated manufactured building will be constructed around the equipment compound. To protect the equipment from weather impacts. Two 7.5 foot swing doors will be installed on each side of the building for convenient access to the equipment. A float switch will be installed below the concrete curb to detect any flooding and/or leaks and shut down the extraction pumps should a liquid level indicate that leakage has been detected.

The treatment process flow diagram is included as Figure 3. The treatment system includes an influent holding tank, transfer pump, duplex bag filters, duplex carbon beds, an effluent holding tank, and one discharge pump. An auto dialer will be installed to notify system operators if the system has shut itself down. Currently, it is assumed that weekly or bi-weekly operation and maintenance will be conducted during the rainy season to check on system operation, record operational parameters, document flow discharged, and perform any required maintenance repairs. System controls will consist of liquid level controls in the extraction trench sump and both tanks, pressure switches on filters and treatment vessels, power surge and failure alarms, and alarm condition level switches on the tanks and containment pad.

Initial Study/Checklist and Negative Declaration

Staff prepared and circulated for comment an Initial Study/Checklist and Negative Declaration for the proposed groundwater extraction and treatment system. It was prepared in accordance with Title 14, Section 21080(c) of the Public Resources Code and Section 15070 and 15071 of the California Code of Regulations.

Staff has determined, on the basis of the Initial Study/Checklist and the documents and sources referenced therein, that the project will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment. In

its professional opinion, staff believes that the proposed project will have a significant beneficial effect on the environment in that the project will abate the discharge of contaminated groundwater to Darby Creek. The Negative Declaration is proposed for adoption by the Regional Water Board.

Comments Received

On July 24, 2006, the Willits Environmental Remediation Trust submitted a comment letter on the proposed Waste Discharge Requirements/NPDES Permit. A copy of the letter is attached to the staff report. An addendum to the draft Waste Discharge Requirements/NPDES Permit in response to these comments will be submitted under separate cover.

Proposed Waste Discharge Requirement/NPDES Permit

The proposed Waste Discharge Requirements, which also serve as a NPDES permit, contain discharge prohibitions, effluent limitations, receiving water limits, and a comprehensive monitoring program to evaluate the effectiveness of the treatment system.

The Permit prohibits the discharge of detectable levels of hexavalent chromium (using a detection limit of 1 ppb), and other pollutants such as volatile organic compounds that may be collected as part of the extraction system. In accordance with the Basin Plan, the discharge of highly treated groundwater to Darby Creek is prohibited during the period of May 15 to September 30 of each year. The spring flows in response to rainfall events and dries up each year depending on the amount of rain received. Contaminated groundwater collected after May 15 will be treated and spray irrigated on land adjacent to the treatment system or evaporated.

Preliminary Staff Recommendation

1. Adopt Resolution No. R1-2006-0067 Approving the Initial Study/Checklist and Negative Declaration for the groundwater extraction and treatment system; and
2. Adopt Waste Discharge Requirements/NPDES Permit Order No. R1-2006-0067 for the groundwater extraction and treatment system